

Stories About Our Soldier Boys in Camp and Abroad

Conducted by Sol M. Wolffson, Headworker Jewish Welfare Board, Camp Bowie, Texas.

The "old guard" of Camp Bowie, and a few of the overseas boys who returned with the 36th Division were present at the dinner at the Metropolitan Hotel as the guests of the Fort Worth Branch of the Jewish Welfare Board last Sunday. It seems quite like old times to have the old boys back with us again, and the bond of sympathetic fellowship that sprung up between our camp standbys and the boys who had just come back made things very pleasant. After an enjoyable meal, reminiscences were gone over, and many pleasant happenings of days gone by were recalled. The boys, reluctant as a rule to talk about their "over there" experiences, forgot their mantles of reserve adopted as a result of the experiences gone through on the other side, and told some extremely interesting stories, which were listened to with the greatest interest by our "silver strippers." There was no distinction among the boys—they were all American soldiers, Jewish boys who had fought for a common cause, and they conducted themselves as such. Never before did the time pass so quickly and it was with the deepest regret that the boys parted for the spending of the afternoon.

The Jewish Welfare Building at Camp Bowie is the busiest, and one of the most popular, if not the most popular, welfare hut in the camp. Messrs. Dillard and Smith of the Y. M. C. A. and Wolffson, of the Jewish Welfare Board, have been working night and day to serve the men who have been quartered around the hut. The greatest work has been the wrapping and shipping home of baggage for the boys, and on the average of four army truckloads of baggage has been wrapped, tagged, checked out and carried to the depots every day for the past ten days. The building has also proven a popular rendezvous for many a khaki clad lover and his sweetheart, wife, mother, or sister. Anyone stepping into the building during the day would think that the stage had been set for a movie presentation of a moonlight night in the park but it is only a case of a reunion of lovers after a separation of a year or more. A ladies' rest room has been fitted up, which is quite a convenience to the ladies waiting for their soldiers. On the whole, the work has been highly satisfactory, judging from the comments of the boys of the 111th Engineers and the 111th Sanitary train, which have been stationed immediately behind the hut, and they say that the "Jewish Y. M. C. A.," as they call the building, is one hard to beat. On Tuesday evening a musicale and a social was run at the building under the combined auspices of the J. W. B. and the Y. M. C. A., which was quite successful, about one hundred and fifty boys crowding into the building to meet the girls. Lemonade was served throughout the evening, and to sum up the affair in the words of the boys "Beaucoup good looking girls, and a rattling good time."

Personals.

The following are the Jewish boys who returned with the 111th Engineers to Camp Bowie: Serjts. Sylvan Goldman and Ben Newman, Corporal Morris Jacobs and Privates Joe Moskowitz and Tonnie Bergman.

With the 143rd Infantry were Louis Richker, Nacy Halpern, Arthur and

Morris Schwarz and Herman Flitterson.

With the 142nd Infantry were Abe Kaplan and Ike Braunig. The other Jewish boys in the regiment were casualties, and were sent home before.

With the 111th Sanitary Train were Ike Gabert, J. Louis Fleischer, Henry Weitzenhoffer A. S. Price, Albert Kahn.

In the 144th Infantry were Lieut. Leo Levy, Harry Corenblith, Harry Spitz, Jake Edelstein and Freed.

Seymour Henninger and Sol Rudnick returned with the 72nd Infantry Brigade Headquarters.

With Division Headquarters were First Lieutenant Jake Braunig and Sergt. L. A. Rosenfield.

Max Ellison and Al Mitchell returned with Company "D" of the 111th Ammunition Train.

With the 111th Supply Train were: Sergt. Louis Wagner and Corporal Alex Black.

All these boys are hale and hearty, and glad to be back in Fort Worth once more. There is not one but who says that he considers Fort Worth his second home, and that he thinks the Fort Worth Jewish people the finest in the country. Due to the short time which the boys remain here, we are unable to give any affairs for them in town, but they all drop into the hut at camp, and everything possible is done to make them feel at home.

Poor Harold Cohn is the original hard luck kid. Upon returning from his furlough last week, he found that the Demobilization Center had sold the Camp Exchange of which he had been steward, to the 43rd Infantry, and that he was out of a job. He is at present detail sergeant of Company 48, Demobilization Center.

Army Field Clerk Maurice Minchen, of the Demobilization Center, Camp Bowie has been discharged from the service, and returned last week to his home in Houston. He will return to the University of Texas this fall, where he will complete his law study.

Private Sam Wasserkrug, of the Medical Detachment, Base Hospital, received his discharge last week and returned to his home in New York City.

Private Mannie Dohan, of the Medical Detachment, Camp Hospital, was transferred to Camp Upton Yaphank, L. I., for discharge last Monday. He will probably be out of the army the end of the week, when he will return to his home in New York City, and resume his studies at Columbia.

THE LOST BATTALION

(Continued from Last Week)

At half past 8 a. m., German artillery shelled the position, but without serious effect owing to the steep reverse slope. Because of our position, the enemy's artillery never became effective. Patrols had been sent out, but soon returned with disturbing reports of Germans on the right and left flanks in small numbers, and the impossibility of establishing liaison in either direction. At about this time Captain Holderman with Co. K, of the 307th, consisting of 79 men, arrived and took position on the right flank.

At 10 a. m. Lieutenant Lenke returned with 13 men from E Company, reporting that that company had been surrounded and that Lieutenant Wilhelm had ordered him to get his platoon

out by any means possible. Lieutenant Wilselm subsequently worked his way through with a few remaining men.

A German trench mortar suddenly opened fire, from 600 yards to the west. Scouts reported the mortar protected by machine guns. A platoon was sent to attack the mortar but met with severe machine gun fire and did not succeed in its mission. The platoon brought back a prisoner who stated that this company of 70 men had been brought in during the night to take position in our rear.

Half an hour later a report was received that the runner post system in the rear had been broken, two posts having been attacked and scattered by the Germans. A message reporting this fact was immediately dispatched to regimental headquarters by carrier pigeons. From this time on, it was impossible to re-establish communication to the rear for several days.

The Battalion was cut off!

The losses in killed and wounded in the first day's fighting had by October 4th reduced the effective strength of the forces, including K Company, 307th Infantry, and the machine gunners, to 520 men. During that day and the succeeding days there was a constant drain on this small band for patrols and runners sent out in an increased effort to get in touch with regimental headquarters in the rear. These patrols were uniformly unsuccessful. They never got through the Germans on the heights to the South. During the day of the 4th, the men were beginning to suffer from lack of food. There were occasional bursts of machine gun fire and two trench-mortar attacks, of an hour duration each, but it was not until 4 p. m. that the organized attack was launched once more on our left and rear.

To follow the sequence of events in "The Pocket" and to distinguish between the attacks that were hurled against its defenders in the next three days is almost an impossibility. To the men who went through the experience it was a hideous nightmare. Under the constant strain of defending themselves at all times from every conceivable kind of an attack launched from every one of four directions and sometimes from all four at once, elemental considerations alone swayed them. The necessity of constant alertness for their own preservation, the passionate desire to kill the enemy, to destroy as many as possible of the mocking devils who were calling out jests and jeers from secure concealment, controlled their thoughts and regulated their existence.

One day was like another. Starvation was creeping on them. There were no meal times to mark the flight of time. There was water in the brook flowing through the bed of the ravine but the price of a drink of water by day was a life. At intervals, the enemy trench mortars, firing at practically point blank range from the left flank, tore up the entire slope to which our men were clinging. The hill became a tangle of twisted shattered trees and splinters. Men were literally blown from one hole into another. Showers of mud and gravel fell upon those who were fortunate enough not to come into actual contact with the flying shell splinters. When it was

deemed that the "minenwerfers" had wrought sufficient confusion and commotion, the enemy sprayed the ground with a pitiless rain of machine gun bullets.

The wounded could receive only the scantiest attention. After the first two days only two of the medical detachment were surviving to render first aid. These two heroically crawled from one sufferer to another. But in scores of cases the injuries were gaping shell wounds or bullet holes, requiring more than a mere bandage. Bandages gave out and it was necessary to take bandages from the dead to bind up the hurts of the living. The dead lay unburied on the ground.

Throughout these six days and nights in "The Pocket" with their bodies tortured by hunger and racked by fever, with death always at their elbow, the spirit of resistance never once weakened in the hearts and minds of officers and men. On the night of October 4th, the firing of our own troops could be distinctly heard to the south, and hopes were high that relieving forces would soon break thru and join them. At intervals in the noise of the combat, the sound of our Chauchats would be distinguished, and the friendly firing seemed to grow stronger and draw nearer. Disappointment was keen, therefore, when daylight dawned without a sign of reinforcements.

If the men on the hill had known that October 6th was a Sunday, they would have called it Blue Sunday. Things seemed at their lowest. The firing of relieving forces to the South had not grown appreciably nearer. Hunger was becoming almost unbearable. The dead of the day before covered the ground. The machine-gunners of the 306th Battalion lost both their officers. After repelling attack after attack on our flanks for four days, only one of their nine machine guns remained in action. Ammunition for our machine guns was almost exhausted. The effective strength of all units had fallen to 275. It was a time for spirits to fail. It was a time for courage to flicker out. It was a time when the few survivors could look into one another's faces and say with conviction, "There is nothing before us but death."

It was at this time that a dramatic episode occurred.

At four in the afternoon of the 7th, a private of Company H reported to the commanding officer. That morning with eight others he had slipped away into the forest to secure a parcel of food dropped not far away by one of the planes. The party encountered a German out-post. Five of the nine were killed and the rest wounded and captured. One of the latter was blindfolded, given a note by the German Commander and sent into our lines. He delivered the note to Major Whitlesey. This was the note:

"To the Commanding Officer—Infantry, 77th American Division.

"Sir—The bearer of this present, Private _____ has been taken prisoner by us. He refused to give the German Intelligence Officer any answer to his questions, and is quite an honorable fellow, doing honor to his Fatherland in the strictest sense of the word.

"He has been charged, against his
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